

THE BLACK DEATH ON CNN

Mr. Jenkins
Western Civilization

Duration: 2 Block sessions

Description: Students are grouped into teams of four and report on different aspects of the Bubonic Plague in CNN broadcast style.

Objectives:

- Students will be able to describe the effects of the 14th Century Bubonic Plague on European society.
- Students will be able to identify changes in the social, economic, political and religious practices brought about by the Black Death.

Materials:

- Library with internet access
- TV and VHS player or other technology
- Videotaped segment of a typical CNN broadcast (needs to be recorded)
- Textbook readings and outside resources
- Paper & pens
- Rubric for grading

Vocabulary:

1. Bulbos – Large swellings in armpit and groin areas.
2. Flagellants – Fanatical individuals who roamed Europe whipping themselves as penance for the plague.

Procedure:

Modeling:

Show a segment of a typical CNN broadcast of any subject. Watch how the anchor introduces the report and does a wrap-up after completion. Also, observe how a correspondent gives the who, what, when, where, why, and how of a story and how personal/expert insights are injected via interviews on site.

Students are to be divided into groups of four (1 anchor, 1 field correspondent, 2 interviewees). Each group is assigned a different category:

- Spread of epidemic – causes
- Medical – what is being done (treatment, prevention)
- Flagellants – social and religious impacts
- Economy – how is it being affected?
- Social views and attitudes – how is it changing?

Each group gives a CNN style report to a global audience (**6 minutes maximum**). You may need props to enhance the setting. The writing of scripts versus “winging it” is recommended. The emphasis is placed on the role playing so delivery and costumes are important.

Assessment:

- See the Rubric provided for assessing students’ broadcasts.

Useful Internet resources:

- The black Death: 1347-1350
Culprit: Oriental Rat Flea
<http://www.insecta-inspecta.com/fleas/bdeath/>
- The Black Death, 1348
<http://www.eyewitnesstohistory.com/plague.htm>